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ABSTRACT

This report to the Arizona Joint Legislative Committee on Career Ladders Task Force outlines an evaluation system for assessing teacher and administrator performance in a career ladder program. Major goals for the program are: (1) to evaluate, place and reward teachers based on performance criteria, which include properly recognized expansion of job responsibilities related to the instructional program and accountability for enhanced student achievement; and (2) to evaluate administrative leaders based on their ability to support and influence teacher instructional competencies, performance and shared leadership skills. A list is presented of the emerging strengths and weaknesses of these two goals as they relate to conditions of legislative intent. Two figures illustrate salient points graphically. (JD)

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# EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN ARIZONA:

## 1985 to 1990

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## A PRELIMINARY PLANNING DOCUMENT BASED ON LONG-RANGE RESEARCH & EVALUATION OF THE PILOT-TEST CAREER LADDERS TEACHER PERFORMANCE & INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

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by

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PROGRAM STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

IN MEETING LEGISLATIVE INTENT

Introduction

A number of key issues need to be addressed in order for reform movements in education such as career ladders incentive and development programs to be successfully implemented. One major issue has to do with participating districts' readiness levels to support change. Figure 1 presents the critical sub-components of districts' readiness levels for integrating reform programs. In addition, there must be valid and reliable evaluation systems for assessing teacher and administrator performance, as well as for tracking student achievement over significant periods of time.

It has been found that the concept of "career ladders" has not been well understood, or uniformly defined, throughout various parts of the country in which this term has been used. The program title should change to "The Arizona Effective Schools Program," with teacher incentive and development as a key goal or component of the process. Other support and focus factors which are interrelated and necessary for effective school reform appear in Figure 2.

The following is a listing of major career ladder goals, as well as the emerging strengths and weaknesses related to conditions of legislative intent.

I. MAJOR GOAL

To evaluate, place and reward teachers based on performance criteria, which include properly recognized expansion of job responsibilities related to the instructional program and accountability for enhanced student achievement.

A. EMERGING PROGRAM STRENGTHS

1. Teacher *skill development and leadership* behavior focused on *instruction* and *student learning* is evident across all career ladders school districts.

2. District evaluation systems have attained considerable improvement in reliability and validity, largely as a result of *input* from teachers.

3. *Job enlargement* and *inservice programs* related to career ladders have increased the effectiveness of most school organizations.

B. EMERGING PROGRAM WEAKNESSES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Legislation has not accounted for substantial diversities in readiness of districts to implement significant improvements over a short period of time. These districts differ in the number of areas requiring immediate improvement, as well as the necessary time and resources to effect change in these areas. Assessment and profiling of individual districts with respect to these relative strengths and weaknesses is necessary in order to determine readiness levels prior to program implementation.

   Recommendations: In particular, districts need to implement strategic long-range change plans, with a start-up evaluation and development period of at least two to three years, as well as designation of an "effective school operation," prior to receiving performance rewards.

2. A second area requiring long-range strategic planning is the measurement of student achievement. Current legislation explicitly recognizes the need for teacher accountability for *student achievement* but does not assure long-range accounting for improvement of achievement by local schools and districts. Each district should be required to develop a comprehensive plan for formulating valid and reliable student assessment instrumentation which is most relevant to its own circumstances, as opposed to simply adopting nationwide standardized tests which may not meet its unique needs.

   Recommendations: Ideally, multiple quantitative and qualitative measurements of student achievement should be developed and used. In addition, districts should be able to demonstrate student achievement results over a period of time.

3. Several districts currently lack adequate *research and evaluation operations* to establish a curriculum which is keyed to their own particular conditions, locally normed, and compatible with long-run tracking of student learning outcomes.

   Recommendations: In order to fulfill this objective, these districts need to upgrade their capability to adapt the latest methodologic developments in current science and technology.

4. While some districts are expending considerable time and resources on narrowly defined *process evaluation procedures*, they are giving insufficient attention to evaluating teacher performance based on *product assessment* or gains in student achievement. These districts have focused almost exclusively on observation of teachers and communication patterns in the classroom which are based on somewhat restrictive models.

   Recommendations: They should concentrate instead on evaluating the quality of time which teachers spend with their students, as well as identifying and improving the assessed weaknesses documented in teacher development plans.

5. Excessive monetary rewards are actually extremely detrimental to teacher *motivation* and general *organizational climate* in districts which do not have valid methods of assessing the level of teacher performance. In particular, the practice of automatic placement of insufficiently qualified teachers at high levels of the ladder violates program intent and creates interpersonal problems for all teachers within that system.

   Recommendations: In order to differentiate applicants as to skill level and to insure accurate placement, districts must develop *valid* and *reliable* evaluation systems.

6. Districts with a large percentage of teachers on the ladder but correspondingly limited funds for dispersal should carefully examine the role and potential of an increased reliance upon *intrinsic motivators*. Teachers are intrinsically motivated to excel for reasons such as the following: a) a desire to gain the approval of their students, administrators, and the general public; b) recognition as professional leaders; c) the satisfaction associated with successfully assuming increasing levels of job responsibility; d) the opportunity to participate in decisions which directly affect their job situations; e) to demonstrate the

magnitude of their accountability for their students' learning; and f) the interpersonal rewards of working in a positive, supportive and cooperative environment.

Recommendations: While money is admittedly an influential and desirable extrinsic motivator, teachers would continue to develop even if it were reduced or eliminated, given adequate provision of intrinsic motivators such as the preceding examples.

7. A number of *organizational factors* have been shown to be interrelated and essential to the development of a successful educational program. These include: a) teacher input into decision making and governance; b) district research and development programs; c) the active involvement and participation of the local school board; and d) the quality of interpersonal communications and school climate.

   Recommendations: Those factors which are currently operating at insufficient levels require directed attention and remediation in order for the district to effect positive change and progress toward program goals.

8. Teacher tendency toward *burn-out* is quite evident in districts which focus on extensive documentation which has not been validly connected to skill improvement or student achievement.

   Recommendations: All program requirements need to be evaluated with respect to the balance which exists between stress-causing conditions and value of the results.

## II. MAJOR GOAL

To evaluate administrative leaders based on their ability to support and influence teacher instructional competencies, performance and shared leadership skills.

### A. EMERGING PROGRAM STRENGTHS

1. As a result of the career ladders program, administrators involved in teacher evaluation and development have expanded and focused their responsibilities toward areas related to classroom instruction.

2. In addition, several administrators have expanded the use of shared responsibility for the improvement of their respective instructional programs.

### B. EMERGING PROGRAM WEAKNESSES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Evaluation systems for administrators have remained largely unchanged throughout the implementation of career ladders programs.

   Recommendations: These systems could be greatly improved by the direct inclusion of confidential assessments of administrators' competencies and performance by their own subordinates, in addition to review by their own superiors.

2. The shift in management style in the direction of cooperative and participatory management procedures has surfaced some insecurities. This negative attitude,in turn, has resulted in mistrust, resentment and dysfunctional interpersonal behaviors.

   Recommendations: A greater amount of attention needs to be devoted to improving the quality of interaction and communication.

3. Incentive and development programs for administrators should parallel those for teachers, in order to allay administrators' concern over some teachers' receiving equivalent, or greater, salaries.

Figure 1
Assessment of Readiness Levels

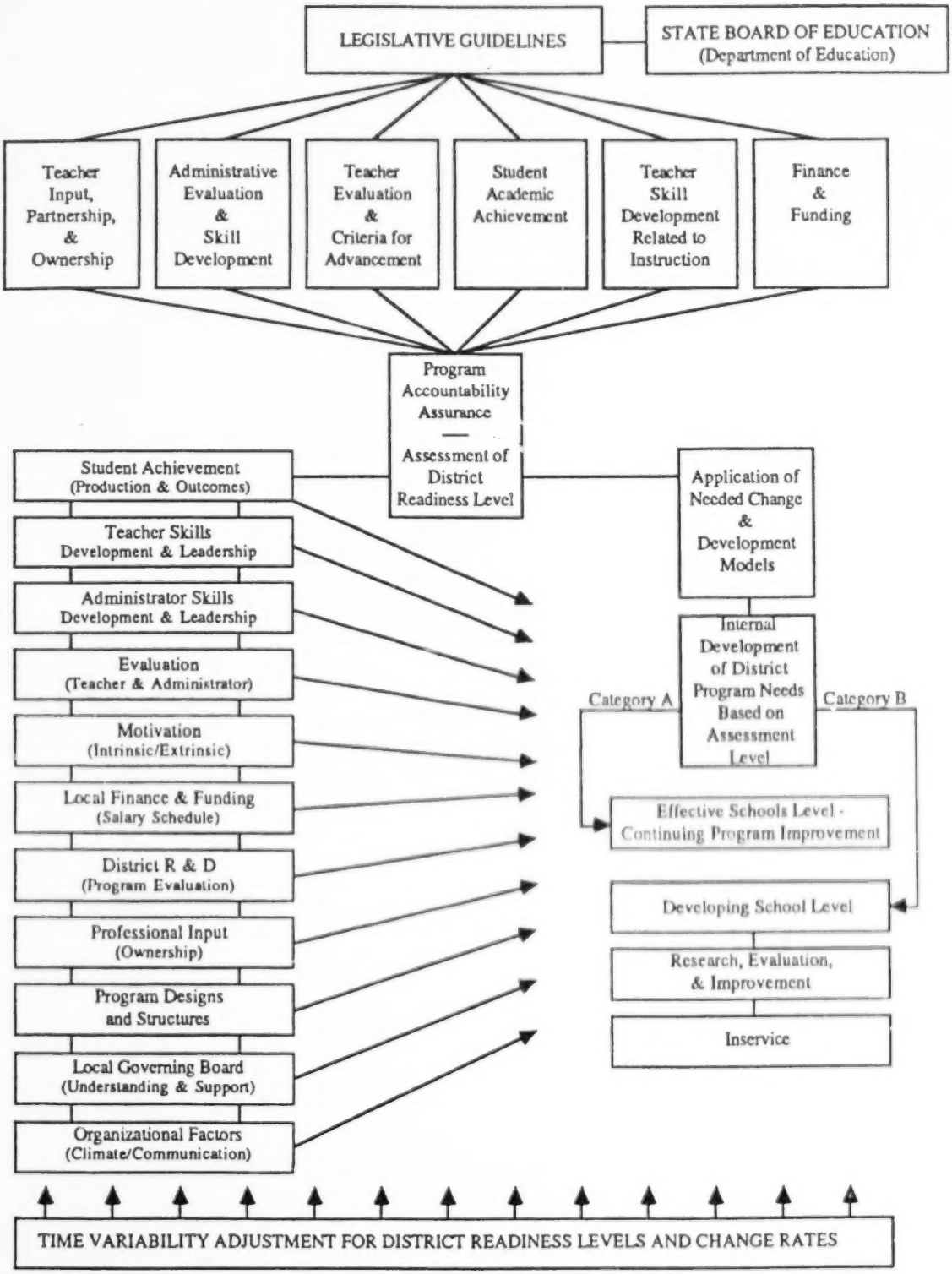
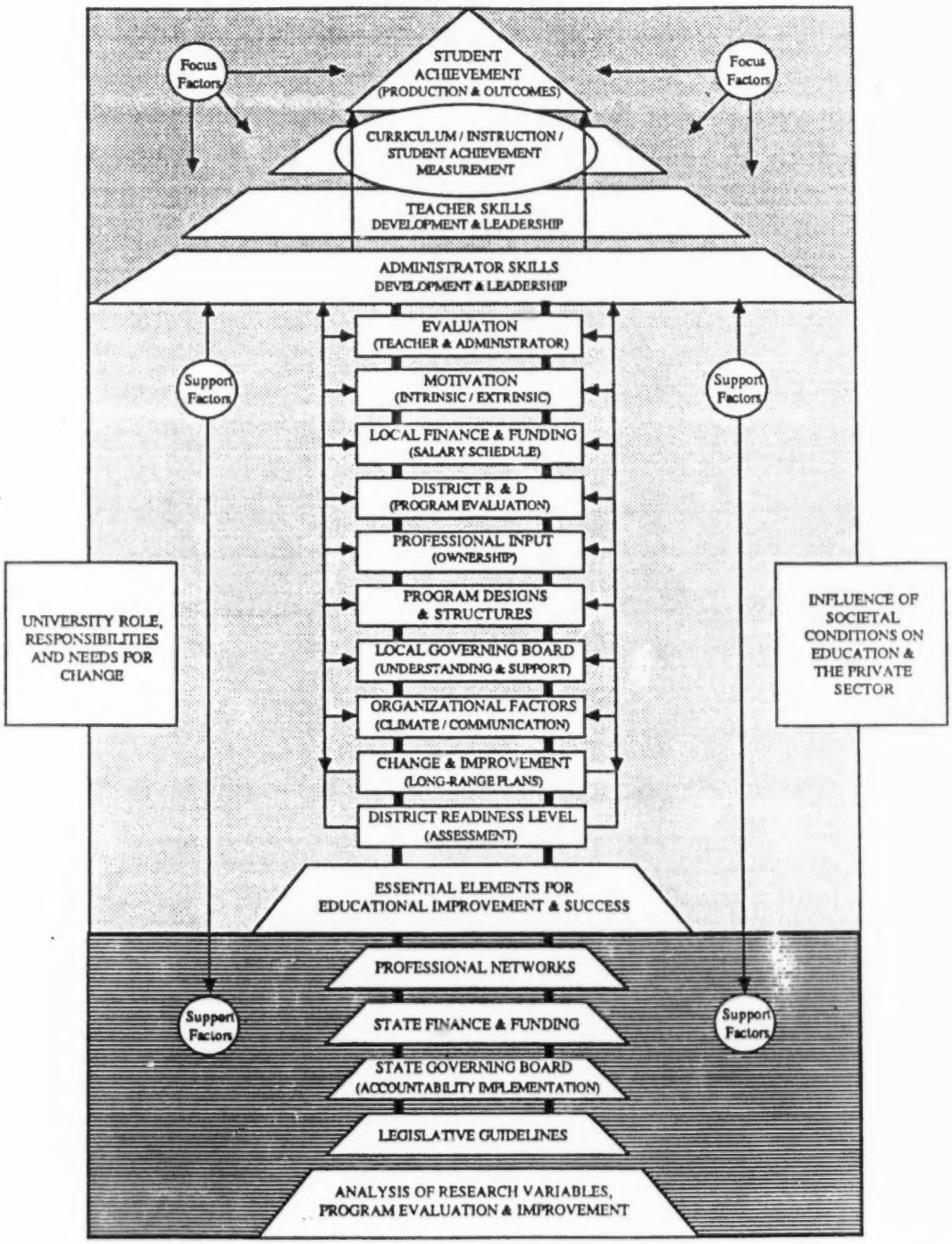

LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Department of Education)
Teacher Input, Partnership, & Ownership
Administrative Evaluation & Skill Development
Teacher Evaluation & Criteria for Advancement
Student Academic Achievement
Teacher Skill Development Related to Instruction
Finance & Funding
Program Accountability Assurance — Assessment of District Readiness Level
Student Achievement (Production & Outcomes)
Teacher Skills Development & Leadership
Administrator Skills Development & Leadership
Evaluation (Teacher & Administrator)
Motivation (Intrinsic/Extrinsic)
Local Finance & Funding (Salary Schedule)
District R & D (Program Evaluation)
Professional Input (Ownership)
Program Designs and Structures
Local Governing Board (Understanding & Support)
Organizational Factors (Climate/Communication)
Application of Needed Change & Development Models
Internal Development of District Program Needs Based on Assessment Level
Category A
Category B
Effective Schools Level - Continuing Program Improvement
Developing School Level
Research, Evaluation, & Improvement
Inservice
TIME VARIABILITY ADJUSTMENT FOR DISTRICT READINESS LEVELS AND CHANGE RATES

Figure 2

MAPPING THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS
FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL REFORM:

Designs and Structures


Focus Factors
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT (PRODUCTION & OUTCOMES)
Focus Factors
CURRICULUM / INSTRUCTION / STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT MEASUREMENT
TEACHER SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP
ADMINISTRATOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT & LEADERSHIP
Support Factors
EVALUATION (TEACHER & ADMINISTRATOR)
MOTIVATION (INTRINSIC / EXTRINSIC)
LOCAL FINANCE & FUNDING (SALARY SCHEDULE)
DISTRICT R & D (PROGRAM EVALUATION)
PROFESSIONAL INPUT (OWNERSHIP)
PROGRAM DESIGNS & STRUCTURES
LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD (UNDERSTANDING & SUPPORT)
ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS (CLIMATE / COMMUNICATION)
CHANGE & IMPROVEMENT (LONG-RANGE PLANS)
DISTRICT READINESS LEVEL (ASSESSMENT)
Support Factors
UNIVERSITY ROLE, RESPONSIBILITIES AND NEEDS FOR CHANGE
INFLUENCE OF SOCIETAL CONDITIONS ON EDUCATION & THE PRIVATE SECTOR
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT & SUCCESS
PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS
Support Factors
STATE FINANCE & FUNDING
Support Factors
STATE GOVERNING BOARD (ACCOUNTABILITY IMPLEMENTATION)
LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES
ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH VARIABLES, PROGRAM EVALUATION & IMPROVEMENT

**A Model of Interrelated Components of Program Support and Focus for Effecting Change and Reform in Education**